

Victorian Principals Association



Unit 2, 13-21 Vale Street, North Melbourne Victoria 3051, Australia
t: (03) 8379 4000 f: (03) 9326 9950 e: info@vpa.org.au w: www.vpa.org.au
Freecall: 1800 VPA VPA (Vic Country) <http://vicprinassoc.wetpaint.com/>



Connected United Powerful

Quote: A leader takes people where they want to go. A great leader takes people where they don't necessarily want to go but ought to be.

Rosalynn Carter

VPA eLETTER : May 2009

Student Engagement Guidelines

We have achieved significant wins in altering key aspects of the original proposal. Many of our objections have either been addressed or at least been partly addressed.

Since the first draft of "Effective Schools are Engaging Schools" was distributed, VASSP & VPA have been working hard to insert some rationality and common sense into a proposal that undermined principals in their ability to set and enforce a positive school culture.

There have been three iterations of this document. The first draft document was followed by a second released by the Minister. This version was announced in the press and put on the DEECD website. After further discussions a third revision was published and is now going to print.

The DEECD also states that:

"Copies of the Effective Schools are Engaging Schools - Student Engagement Policy Guidelines will be distributed to all schools in Term 2, 2009. From the beginning of Term 2, 2009, professional learning opportunities will also be offered in each region. These opportunities will support the implementation of the guidelines and the requirement to develop a Student Engagement Policy. Regional Offices will advise schools directly."

The table below compares the original draft, the Minister's version with the final version.

Original Draft Document	Final Version	Comment
Consultation		
8 days to respond	No broad consultation but continuous discussion with VPA/VASSP at departmental and Minister level	There have been a lot of discussions behind the scenes and VPA/VASSP has ensured that other stakeholder and interested groups were kept informed about the issues.
Student Support Groups		
Lack of clarity re composition	Composition clarified (section 4.2.3)	It was unclear which teachers or professionals could or should have been involved.

Lack of clarity re the role of the parent advocate	The role of the advocate clarified and is essentially a support and observer role (4.2.3)	There was no definition of what this person was there for. This has been remedied.
Unrealistic timelines re the meeting requirements of the SSG	"In exceptional circumstances the SSG may occur outside the timelines". (4.3.2).	More flexibility around the timelines for convening a SSG meeting. This will apply at the different stages of the process
<i>Suspension – general principles</i>		
Emphasis on in-school suspensions. "Wherever possible, out-of-school suspensions should be avoided".	This is replaced with, "the principal has two options available; in-school or out-of-school suspensions. In determining the most appropriate, the principal should consider the educational, social and emotional impacts on the student and school community". (4.3.1)	The focus on in-school default suspension has changed. Very clear that it is up to the principal to decide. A new section was added outlining a number of strategies a school may employ for in-school suspensions.
<i>Procedures prior to suspension</i>		
Emphasis on the convening of a SSG prior to action being taken, except where an immediate response is required.	"In exceptional circumstances the SSG may occur outside the timelines". (4.3.2).	More flexibility around the timelines for convening a SSG meeting. This will apply at the different stages of the process.
<i>Period of suspension</i>		
Maximum continuous period 3 days	Maximum continuous period 5 days (4.3.6)	This was changed fairly early in the process.
<i>Authority for Expulsion</i>		
"Principals are responsible for ensuring that the educational and support program at the school avoids the need to expel students"	"The Principal is responsible for student expulsion". (4.4.1)	Makes it clear that the principal is responsible for expulsions.
<i>Procedures prior to Expulsion</i>		
"Before a Principal can expel a student, the principal <u>must be able to demonstrate to the regional director that:</u> - a comprehensive range of strategies....has been implemented, - despite....behaviour persists etc"	"Before a Principal can expel a student, the principal <u>must ensure:</u> - a comprehensive range of strategies....has been implemented, - despite....behaviour persists etc" (4.4.3)	Removes the requirement that the principal had to get the RD's permission prior to expulsion.
<i>Procedures for expulsion</i>		
"It is the responsibility of the principal of the expelling school to ensure that the student is enrolled...."	"It is the responsibility of the principal of the expelling school, <u>with support from the RD or their nominee</u> , to ensure that the student is enrolled...." (4.4.4)	Puts the onus on the regional office to actively assist in student placements.

Procedures following expulsion		
<p>"A principal must forward...a written expulsion report which must contain:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - short history - summary of options considered - future arrangements - recommendations for further action <p>The RD must consider the report with regard to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - students need to receive an education - health, safety and wellbeing of other students - educational program of the school <p>The RD must notify the principal ...that the report has been... approved or otherwise."</p>	<p>"A principal must forward...a written expulsion report which must contain:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - short history - summary of options considered - future arrangements - recommendations for further action <p>(4.4.5)</p>	<p>Emphasises the removal of the need to get the RD's permission prior to expulsion by deleting "The RD must consider...approved or otherwise".</p>

It is a good win for Victorian education across the board.

Education Stimulus Plan - BER Update

Last week VASSP, APF and VPA spoke with DEECD regarding Education Stimulus Plan (BER)

The template costs incorporate the following factors:

- Increase in prices and construction within the time frame
- Averaged out special factors across the State.
- Project Manager costs.

Over entitlement process

- School in consultation with the region committing to meeting ongoing costs – electricity, cleaning. There is a Ready Reckoner to assist
- Requires principal approval, no extra process.

National School Plan

Every school should have submitted a formal proposal. If you have not finished a proposal please contact your RNL now.

If your funding has been approved **Online Training** is still a few weeks away. Each school needs to delegate a person to be trained before money can be spent. The training is supposed to take 15 minutes.

The need to extend the capacity of School Council to have the power to delegate projects is planned to increase from \$50,000 to \$200,000 specifically for NSP projects until 2010.

Improvements in process:

1. ICT Backbone included in templates
2. Concept of satellite units in mainstream schools, developed in partnership with special settings.
3. Additional staff have been allocated to assist principals in the implementation of ESP as was requested by VPA position paper.

BER DEEWR website to find details of announcements etc -

<http://www.deewr.gov.au/Schooling/BuildingTheEducationRevolution/Pages/BuildingEducationRevolutionNews.aspx>

VPA Annual Conference and Dinner

All Educational Leaders are welcome to attend. Keep your diary free for the **VPA Annual Conference and Dinner** held on **Thursday 15 October** at Hilton on the Park. The title is **Shaping Culture..Learning from Successful Leaders** Registration forms will be out shortly.

Professional Learning

A number of professional learning sessions in metro and regional areas are planned.

- Dealing with Difficult People PD in Albury / Wodonga area 2 June
- Want to Know how to avoid the MPB? Offered across the state from mid May to end of August aimed at Principals, Assistant Principals and Aspiring Principals.
- The Path to Principalship Offered in Mildura on 13 May for Assistant Principals and Leading Teachers aspiring to Principalship. VASSP and VPA is offering a full day workshop with Geoff Barclay

Resources Forum – The response to the joint VPA and VASSP first Resources Forum for 2009 on **12 May** has been overwhelming. Guest speaker being **Tony Bugden** will discuss the ES Agreement and Teacher work load amongst other relevant issues, following conversation with Tony, Patrick Waring, Director Caroline Springs College and Robert Lamb, Principal Gladstone Park Secondary College.

Why join the VPA? A member's experience



Gary Green Principal near Mildura – Ranfurly PS
VPA member since 1996

As the Principal of a school that is a long way from “the big smoke”, the support and guidance provided by the VPA is essential to my leadership role. Regular contact with extremely knowledgeable field officers has helped me to successfully negotiate through several potentially tricky situations and I value the advice I can tap into through contacting other members by phone. Even though I am so far from Melbourne, there are many forums and opportunities that allow me to be an active contributor and to have a voice in the policy and decisions of the VPA.

For further on VPA membership, visit the VPA website via
<http://www.vppa.org.au/membership.asp>

Gabrielle Leigh
President
Victorian Principals Association

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